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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: MOPS PREL PGOV RW
SUBJECT: RPF CHAIRMAN KANYARENGWE VISITS DEPARTMENT

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: MEETING WITH A/S COHEN DECEMBER 22, RPF
CHAIRMAN KANYARENGWE EMPHASIZED THE EXPECTED THEMES,
PARTICULARLY THAT THE FRENCH ARE HELPING THE FAR PREPARE
AN OUTBREAK OF WAR AND THEREFORE CONTRIBUTING TO
HABYARIMANA'S INTRANSIGENCE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: CHARLES L DARIS
DATE/CASE ID: 15 DEC 2005 200103014

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COHEN COUNSELED THE RPF TO CONSIDER INCORPORATING THE EXTREMIST CDR IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, TO ALLOW HABYARIMANA A GRACEFUL EXIT FROM POLITICAL POWER, AND TO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS IN THE FRENCH ROLE. NEITHER SIDE DEFINED A PRACTICAL MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN KANYARENGWE'S FORMULA--ESSENTIALLY THAT HABYARIMANA "REIGN BUT NOT RULE"--AND THE MRND'S APPARENT INSISTENCE ON MAINTAINING, AT A MINIMUM, BLOCKING POWER OVER ALL IMPORTANT TRANSACTIONS. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE POOR TIMING OF THE ARUSHA COMMUNIQUE ON DISTRIBUTION OF CABINET POSTS TO BE SIGNED BY THE NEGOTIATORS 12/23 FELL ON DEAF EARS. FOLLOW-ON SESSIONS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS INDICATED KANYARENGWE AND HIS DELEGATION APPRECIATED USG INVOLVEMENT BUT WERE NOT SWAYED BY OUR COMMENTS. THE VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN A ROUTINE LOBBYING EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

3. IN A MEETING WITH A/S COHEN REQUESTED BY THE RPF, CHAIRMAN ALEXIS KANYARENGWE COVERED THE MAJOR THEMES THEY HAVE SOUNDED IN RECENT WEEKS. HE INSISTED THAT THE RPF

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WILL CONTINUE TO RESPECT THE CEASEFIRE DESPITE FAILURE TO MEET THE OCTOBER 10 NEGOTIATING DEADLINE AND DESPITE WHAT IT CONSIDERS GOR PROVOCATIONS. THE RPF ASSERTS HABYARIMANA HAS HANDICAPPED THE GOR NEGOTIATORS DUE TO HIS INSISTANCE ON RETAINING THE LARGEST PIECE OF THE POWER SHARING PIE. THE MRND'S ALLY, THE EXTREMIST HUTU CDR, CAN NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT PREACHES VIOLENCE. KANYARENGWE ENDED BY ACCUSING THE FRENCH OF HELPING THE GOVERNMENT TO PREPARE FOR A NEW MILITARY OFFENSIVE AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO HABYARIMANA'S INTRANSIGENCE. HE ASKED FOR USG SUPPORT IN ENCOURAGING THE FRENCH TO CEASE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE WAR EFFORT.

4. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION BY A/S COHEN ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS, THE CHAIRMAN STATED THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED. DESK OFFICER INTERJECTED THAT THERE APPEARED TO BE TWO OPINIONS ON THIS SINCE, AT THE SAME TIME THE PRIME MINISTER WAS PROPOSING THE LATEST FORMULA TO THE MRND 12/22, THE NEGOTIATORS IN ARUSHA WERE ALREADY AGREEING TO THOSE TERMS. DISMISSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS BAD TIMING, KANYARENGWE MERELY REPLIED THAT IT IS NOT "NORMAL" TO HAVE NEGOTIATIONS OCCURRING IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE.

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5. COHEN THEN ASKED IF THE PRESIDENT WILL RETAIN ANY POWER IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD OR IF HIS ROLE WILL BE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND. KANYARENGWE NEGATED THE COMPARISON AND INSISTED THAT HABYARIMANA MUST FUNCTION AT THE CENTER OF THE GOVERNMENT WHERE HE WILL PRESIDE OVER THE CABINET AND RAISE ISSUES OF HIS OWN CONCERN.

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6. DRAWING PARALLELS TO INITIAL OPPOSITION TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE U.S., COHEN THEN URGED THE RPF TO REFLECT ON THE DANGER IN EXCLUDING AN EXTREMIST GROUP FROM THE NEW GOVERNMENT. AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE SYSTEM, THE CDR MEMBERS WOULD HAVE TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO GOVERNMENT DECISIONS AND RESPECT ITS RULES. EXCLUDED, THEY WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BY SABOTAGING THE PROCESS ITSELF. KANYARENGWE NODDED, BUT DID NOT REPLY.

7. SIMILARLY, COHEN CAUTIONED THE RPF NOT TO ASK HABYARIMANA TO "COMMIT POLITICAL SUICIDE" OR TO SEEK REVENGE SHOULD HE LOSE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. A MEANS MUST BE FOUND TO GENTLY EASE THE OLD ORDER AFRICAN LEADERS OUT OF POWER AND TO REASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE IMPRISONED OR DESTROYED.

8. TURNING TO FRENCH INVOLVEMENT, COHEN REMINDED KANYARENGWE THAT THE FRENCH INTERVENED MILITARILY BECAUSE OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO AN "OLD FRIEND," AND URGED HIM TO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THEIR ROLE. LIKE THE USG, THE FRENCH WANT A DEMOCRATIC RATHER THAN A MILITARY SOLUTION IN RWANDA AND HAVE HELPED PUSH HABYARIMANA INTO CONCESSIONS. RATHER THAN HELPING THE FAR PREPARE AN OFFENSIVE, IT IS MORE LIKELY THE FRENCH, BY THEIR PRESENCE, ARE HELPING PREVENT MILITARY HARDLINERS FROM LAUNCHING ONE. COMMENTING ON THE REPORTED CEASEFIRE VIOLATION INVOLVING FRENCH ENGINEERS, HE NOTED THAT IT APPEARS THE FRENCH HAVE RECOGNIZED THE MISTAKE AND ARE MOVING TO CORRECT IT. HE ADDED THAT THE USG WILL WATCH CLOSELY TO SEE IF THE ERROR IS REPEATED. KANYARENGWE

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EXPRESSED THANKS FOR USG EFFORTS WITH THE FRENCH, BUT STRESSED THAT HABYARIMANA, STRENGTHENED BY THEIR PRESENCE, CONTINUES TO COMMIT SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST THE RWANDAN PEOPLE.

9. IN CONCLUDING THE MEETING, COHEN COMMENDED THE RPF FOR ALLOWING THE RECENT ICRC SHIPMENT OF UGANDAN BEANS TO TRANSIT THE KAGITUMBA ROAD. REPEATING THE RPF LINE THAT THEY PREFER THE GATUNA ROUTE BECAUSE THEY CAN ONLY GUARANTEE PROTECTION TO THE TRUCKS IN THEIR OWN TERRITORY, KANYARENGWE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOR HAS OFTEN ORCHESTRATED EVENTS TO FRAME THE RPF. HE CITED FALSE STORIES ABOUT THE RPF KILLING MRITHA, THE SILVERBACK GORILLA WHOM HE CLAIMS WAS ACTUALLY KILLED BY FAR SOLDIERS, AND ABOUT INCINERATED BODIES OF RWANDANS WHO WERE ACTUALLY KILLED BY LOOTING FAR SOLDIERS IN BYUMBA. THE RPF FEARS SABOTAGE OF THE ICRC TRUCKS SINCE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KAGITUMBA ROAD RESTS WITH THE FAR.

10. ACCOMPANIED BY RPF STRATEGIST THEOGEN RUDASINGA AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES MURIGANDE, KANYARENGWE CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS AFTERWARDS WITH AF/C DIRECTOR ROBERT PRINGLE, MILITARY ADVISER LTC ANTHONY MARLEY, AND DESK OFFICER CAROL FULLER. (DAS JOHN BYERLY SAT IN ONLY ON THE MEETING WITH A/S COHEN.) KANYARENGWE REITERATED STATEMENTS THAT HABYARIMANA AND THE MRND HAVE BLOCKED THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS. PUSHED FURTHER ON A/S COHEN'S COUNSEL TO GENTLY EASE HABYARIMANA OUT OF POWER, HE SPELLED OUT THE PRESIDENT'S NEW ROLE AS HEAD OF STATE, ELIGIBLE TO PRESENT HIMSELF FOR ELECTIONS, RAISE ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION, AND TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT

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DECISIONS. BRIDLING AT THE SUGGESTION OF FORGETTING THE PAST, HE SAID THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE. AS FOR ELECTIONS, THEY CAN NOT BE HELD AS LONG AS THERE IS INTERNAL DISORDER. MOREOVER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT MUST FIRST BE CLEANED UP, THE DISPLACED REESTABLISHED IN THEIR HOMES, AND THE REFUGEES REINTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY. ON MILITARY INTEGRATION, THE REAL QUESTION FOR THE RPF IS THE SIZE OF THE INTEGRATED ARMY; PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATION ARE NEGOTIABLE.

COMMENT

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11. IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A ROUTINE LOBBYING EFFORT, KANYARENGWE FAILED TO BREAK NEW GROUND OR ASK FOR SPECIFIC ADVICE. HE TOOK THE POINTS FROM A/S COHEN QUIETLY, ARGUED A BIT WITH POINTS MADE BY OTHERS LATER, BUT WAS CLEARLY UNSWAYED BY OUR ARGUMENTS. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE POOR TIMING FOR THE COMMUNIQUE TO BE SIGNED BY THE NEGOTIATORS 12/23 IN ARUSHA FELL ON DEAF EARS. KANYARENGWE REITERATED THE RPF'S DESIRE FOR THE USG AND OTHER OBSERVERS TO STAY ENGAGED AND WE REASSURED HIM WE WOULD. OTHERWISE, THE MAJOR IMPORTANCE OF THE MEETING WAS GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER.
EAGLEBURGER

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